



# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CHP Maximum Enforcement Period**

(SACRAMENTO) For 60 years, The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has combated roadway deaths during six major holidays with its Maximum Enforcement Period (MEP). During the MEPs up to 80 percent of CHP officers are on the road providing extra protection and service to the motoring public.

The MEPs (or Holiday Death Count as they became known in the media) began as a mandate from the Legislature for the CHP to compile traffic collision data for the state of California. As part of that effort, the first CHP Commissioner Clifford Peterson created the MEP in 1948 as a response to the alarming number of deaths on California roadways during holiday periods. A look at the year-by-year statistics shows that the number of fatal crashes during holidays has generally declined over the years despite the large increase in population and miles driven.

“We believe this is due not only to safety improvements in the vehicles, but also the added public awareness combined with increased enforcement. As a result, thousands of lives have been saved over the past 60 years,” said CHP Deputy Commissioner Skip Carter.

Former Commissioner Peterson’s granddaughter is currently an analyst at CHP headquarters in Sacramento. “My grandfather would be proud to know that a program created under his watch so many years ago is still going strong and preventing tragedy today,” said Megan (Peterson) Bucko.

During the upcoming Labor Day Weekend MEP, from 6 p.m. Friday through midnight Monday, officers will be looking for violators of the three major causes of highway deaths: speeding, DUI and people not wearing their seat belts. The worst Labor Day Weekend death toll was 81 in 1980. Last year, 49 people were killed on California roadways. In 1948, 43 people were killed, but California’s population was 10 million compared to nearly 38 million last year. If fatalities had kept pace with population growth, we’d be reporting 150-160 deaths each Labor Day weekend.

“It’s clear there would be more traffic fatalities today without the added enforcement by not only the CHP, but all law enforcement in California. We also want to give special thanks to the media for helping us save lives by getting the word out during these periods,” stated Deputy Commissioner Carter.

This Labor Day Weekend is also an Operation C.A.R.E. (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) which will emphasize added patrols on interstate highways such as I-5, I-15 and I-80.

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